

CHEVY CHASE MONTGOMERY JOURNAL (MD)
26 July 1983

Former Spies Form Legal Fees Fund

Old spies don't fade away. They form legal defense funds.

Challenge, a Maryland-based organization of former intelligence officers, was formed a year ago to raise funds to help U.S. intelligence agency personnel pay legal expenses if they believe they have been defamed.

The group, incorporated in 1981, announced new officers and a fund-raising drive last week.

Richard H. Landsdale, a former associate general counsel with the CIA, is the group's new president. He served with the CIA for more than 20 years.

J.E. "Ned" Dolan, a former intelligence officer, retired Marine captain and citizen activist from Garrett Park, is the group's vice president.

The group has aided in a lawsuit filed by former CIA agent David Atlee Phillips of Bethesda. Phillips is suing authors and publishers who have suggested he had some role in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and former Chilean Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier.

Challenge's current fund-raising efforts are to assist former U.S. Ambassador to Chile Nathaniel Davis in his lawsuit against the producers of the movie "Missing," according to the organization's announcement.

Davis' suit charges that the film, which starred Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek, wrongfully implicates him in the death of an American freelance journalist killed during the 1973 CIA-supported coup that toppled popularly elected leftist President Salvador Allende.

The group also has offered to help defray the legal expenses of retired Army Gen. William C. Westmoreland in a suit against CBS. The former commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam has charged that the broadcasting company libeled him by airing a documentary that said a conspiracy concealed military intelligence about the Vietnam War from the president and Congress.

"It's awfully hard to take on an author or a publisher when you're small and don't have any money," Landsdale said.

Challenge's board of directors and advisers include a number of former high-ranking military officers, former CIA officials and conservative politicians, among them former U.S. Sen. James Buckley and former CIA Director William Colby.

"We don't profess to be (of) any political persuasion, but we do have a common military background that generally is rather conservative," Landsdale said.